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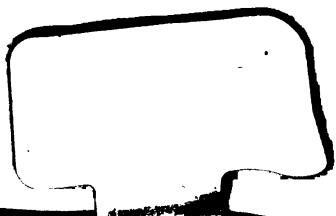
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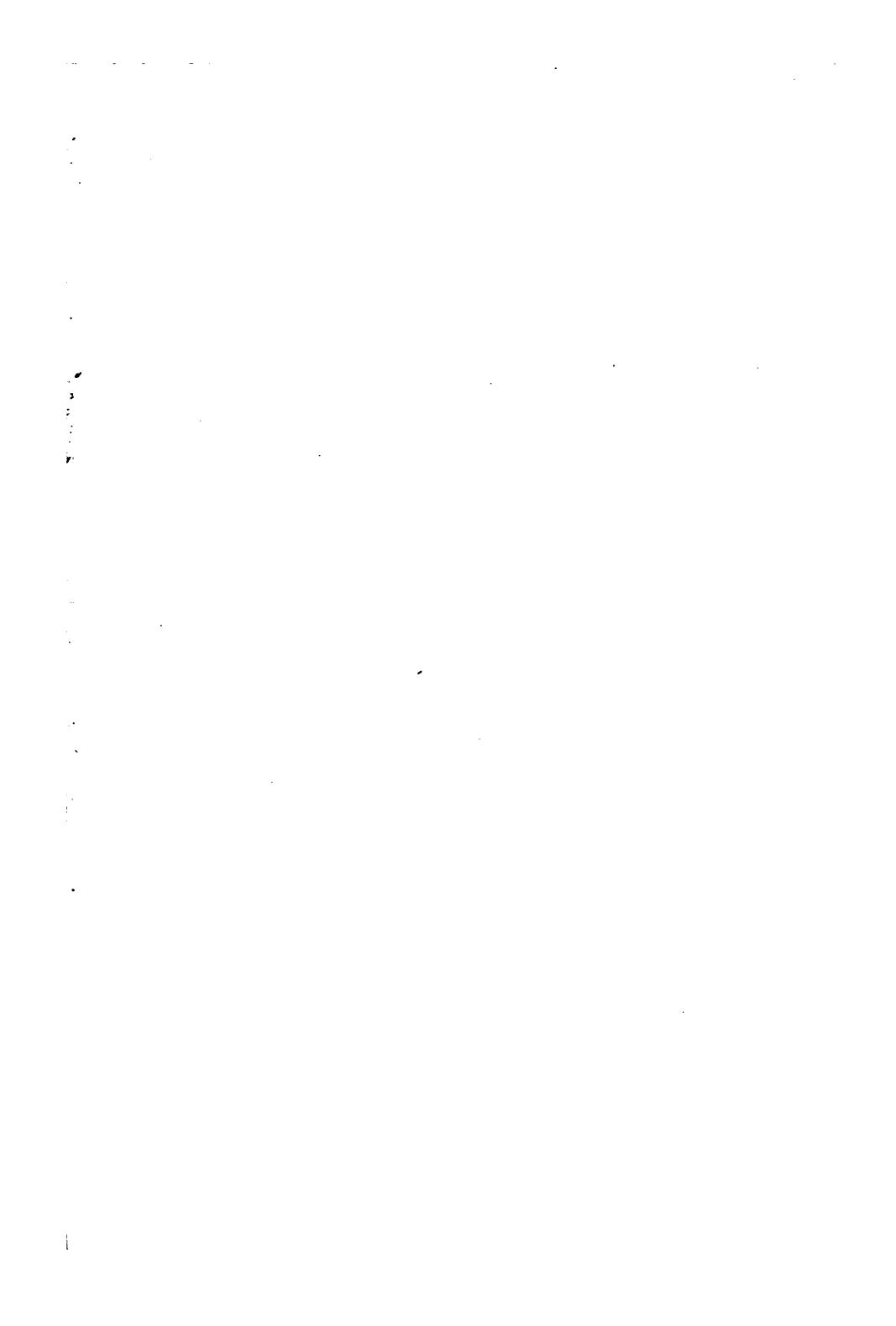
The John Payne Society.

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ABOU MOHAMMED
THE LAZY AND
OTHER TALES.
FROM THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

OLNEY : THOMAS WRIGHT :
MDCCCCVI.

OLNEY :

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THE
JOHN PAYNE SOCIETY.

Object. To popularise the works of the great poet and translator, Mr. John Payne.

Membership. 5/- every two years. This will entitle the Member to admittance to the Society's meetings and a copy of the Society's publications as issued during those two years.

Time and Place of Meeting. About the end of June. Particulars of the next meeting will reach Members early in that month.

Publications issued gratis to Members of the Society :

- i. *Sir Winfrith and other Poems*, by John Payne.
- ii. *Abou Mohammed the Lazy* and other stories from "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night."
- iii. *The John Payne Birthday Book* (in preparation).

The Society was founded 2 May 1905. The First Annual Meeting was held at Forest Gate, 12 August 1905, when addresses were given by Mr. John Casey, Dr. B. Smith, Mr. W. Kirby, Mr. C. F. Newcombe and Mr. Thomas Wright.

Further particulars can be obtained from the Secretary, Cowper School, Olney, or from any of the Members.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages consist of selections from Mr. John Payne's famous translation of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*, usually called *The Arabian Nights*, which was commenced in 1877. His edition of the Nights proper, 9 vols., appeared in 1882-4, his Supplementary Volumes, *Tales from the Arabic* (3 vols.) and *Alaeddin and Zein ul Asnam*, between 1884 and 1889. The lines written by Mr. Payne on the completion of these labours will be found on page 44 of the first volume issued by the John Payne Society :-- "Sir Winfrith." Of the enormous literary wealth of Mr. Payne's translation these pages will give but a feeble idea, for the shorter tales, though possessing a virtue of their own, are lacking in the magnificence and profusion that characterise the longer narratives, an example of which, however, we may be able to give in some subsequent volume of this series.

Of the controversy respecting the merits of the translations made by Mr. Payne and Sir Richard Burton we shall here say nothing except that the whole matter is thoroughly examined in Mr. Thomas Wright's recently published "*Life of Sir Richard Burton.*"¹

We are glad to be able to state that Mr. Payne's New Volume of Poems, *Flowers of France*, will be ready in a few days.

The next volume of this series will be a *John Payne Birthday Book*, with a portrait of Mr. Payne for frontispiece.

¹ 2 vols. with 64 plates. Everett & Co., 1906. See Press Extracts at end of this book.



ABOU MOHAMMED THE LAZY.¹

It is told that Haroun er Reshid² was sitting one day on the throne of the Khalifate, when there came in to him a youth of his eunuchs, bearing a crown of red gold, set with pearls and rubies and all manner of other jewels, such as money might not buy, and kissing the ground before him, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the lady Zubeideh³ kisses the earth before thee and saith to thee, thou knowest she hath let make this crown, which lacks a great jewel for its top and she hath made search among her treasures, but cannot find a jewel to her mind.' Quoth the Khalif to his chamberlains and officers, 'Make search for a great jewel, such as Zubeideh desires.' So they sought, but found nothing befitting her and told the Khalif, who was vexed therat and exclaimed, 'Am I Khalif and king of the kings of the earth and lack of a jewel? Out on ye! Enquire of the merchants.' So they enquired of the merchants, who replied, 'Our lord the Khalif will not find a jewel such as he requires save with a man of Bassora,⁴ by name Abou Mohammed the Lazy.' They acquainted the Khalif with this and he bade his Vizier Jaafir send a letter to the Amir Mohammed ez Zubeidi, governor of Bassora, commanding him to equip Abou Mohammed the Lazy and bring him to Baghdad.

Jaafir accordingly wrote a letter to that effect and despatched it by Mesrour,⁵ who set out forthright for Bassora and went in to the governor, who rejoiced in him and entreat-

¹ Payne's *Arabian Nights*, Vol. iv., p. 10.

² The famous Haroun er Reshid, hero of many stories in *The Arabian Nights*, was Khalif from A.D. 786 to 809. In his nocturnal rambles through the streets of Baghdad he was generally accompanied by his vizier, Jaafir the Barmecide and Mesrour his headsman, and sometimes by the dissolute poet Abou Nuwas. Mr. Payne's brilliant passage respecting the Khalif's terrible crime—the extermination of the Barmecides—will be found in the Terminal Essay of *The Thousand Nights and one Night*, Vol. ix.

³ Zubeideh.—Wife of Haroun er Reshid.

⁴ Bassora.—Now Basra, a city at the head of the Persian Gulf.

⁵ Mesrour.—The Khalif's headsman.

ed him with the utmost honour. Then Mesrour read him the Khalif's mandate, to which he replied, 'I hear and obey,' and forthwith despatched him, with a company of his followers, to Abou Mohammed's house. When they reached it, they knocked at the door, whereupon a servant came out and Mesrour said to him, 'Tell thy master that the Commander of the Faithful calls for him.' The servant went in and told his master, who came out and found Mesrour, the Khalif's chamberlain, and a company of the governor's men at the door. So he kissed the earth before Mesrour and said, 'I hear and obey the summons of the Commander of the Faithful; but enter ye my house,' 'We cannot do that,' replied Mesrour, 'save in haste; for the Commander of the Faithful awaits thy coming.' But he said, 'Have patience with me a little, till I set my affairs in order.' So, after much pressure and persuasion, they entered and found the corridor hung with curtains of blue brocade, figured with gold, and Abou Mohammed bade one of his servants carry Mesrour to the bath. Now this bath was in the house and Mesrour found its walls and floor of rare and precious marbles, wrought with gold and silver, and its waters mingled with rose-water. The servants served Mesrour and his company on the most perfect wise and clad them, on their going forth of the bath, in robes of honour of brocade, interwoven with gold.

Then they went in to Abou Mohammed and found him seated in his upper chamber upon a couch inlaid with jewels Over his head hung curtains of gold brocade, wrought with pearls and jewels, and the place was spread with cushions, embroidered in red gold. When he saw Mesrour, he rose to receive him and bidding him welcome, seated him by his side. Then he called for food: so they brought the table of food which when Mesrour saw, he exclaimed, 'By Allah, never saw I the like of this in the palace of the Commander of the Faithful!' For indeed it comprised all manner of meats, served in dishes of gilded porcelain. So they ate and drank and made merry till the end of the day, when Abou Mohammed gave Mesrour and each of his company five thousand dinars¹; and on the morrow he clad them in dresses of honour of green and gold and entreated them with the utmost honour. Then said Mesrour to him, 'We can abide no longer, for fear of the Khalif's displeasure.' 'O my lord,' answered Abou Mohammed, 'have patience with us till to-morrow, that

¹ Dinar.—Gold piece, worth about half a sovereign.

we may equip ourselves, and we will then depart with you.' So they tarried that day and night with him; and next morning, Abou Mohammed's servants saddled him a mule with housings and trappings of gold, set with all manner pearls and jewels; whereupon quoth Mesrour in himself, 'I wonder if, when he presents himself in this equipage before the Commander of the Faithful, he will ask him how he came by all this wealth.'

Then they took leave of Ez Zubeidi and setting out from Bassora, fared on, without stopping, till they reached Baghdad and presented themselves before the Khalif, who bade Abou Mohammed be seated. So he sat down and addressing the Khalif in courtly wise, said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have brought with me a present by way of homage have I thy leave to produce it?' 'There is no harm in that,' replied the Khalif; whereupon Abou Mohammed caused bring in a chest from which he took a number of rarities and amongst the rest, trees of gold, with leaves of emerald and fruits of rubies and topazes and pearls. Then he fetched another chest and brought out of it a pavilion of brocade adorned with pearls and rubies and emeralds and chrysolites and other precious stones; its poles were of the finest Indian aloes-wood, and its skirts were set with emeralds. Thereon were depicted all manner beasts and birds and other created things, spangled with rubies and emeralds and chrysolites and balass rubies and other precious stones.

When Er Reshid saw these things, he rejoiced exceedingly and Abou Mohammed said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, deem not that I have brought these to thee, fearing aught or coveting aught: but I knew myself to be but a man of the people and that these things befitted none save the Commander of the Faithful. And now, with thy leave, I will show thee for thy diversion, something of what I can do.' 'Do what thou wilt,' answered Er Reshid, 'That we may see.' 'I hear and obey,' said Abou Mohammed and moving his lips, beckoned to the battlements of the palace, whereupon they inclined to him; and then he made another sign to them, and they returned to their place. Then he made a sign with his eye, and there appeared before him cabinets with closed doors, to which he spoke, and lo, the voices of birds answered him [from within]. The Khalif marvelled exceedingly at this and said to him, 'How camest thou by all this, seeing that thou art only known as Abou Mohammed the Lazy, and they tell me

that thy father was a barber-surgeon, serving in a public bath and left thee nothing ?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'listen to my story, for it is an extraordinary one and its particulars are wonderful ; were it graven with needles upon the corners of the eye, it would serve as a lesson to him who can profit by admonition.' 'Let us hear it' said the Khalif. 'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Abou Mohammed, '(may God prolong to thee glory and dominion) that the report of the folk, that I am known as the Lazy and that my father left me nothing, is true ; for he was, as thou hast said, but a barber-surgeon in a bath. In my youth I was the laziest wight on the face of the earth ; indeed so great was my sluggishness that, if I lay asleep in the sultry season and the sun came round upon me, I was too lazy to rise and remove from the sun to the shade ; and thus I abode till I reached my fifteenth year, when my father was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High and left me nothing. However, my mother used to go out to service and feed me and give me to drink, whilst I lay on my side.'

One day, she came in to me, with five silver dirhems,¹ and said to me, "O my son, I hear that the Sheikh Aboul Muzeffer is about to go a voyage to China." (Now this Sheikh was a good and charitable man and loved the poor.) So come, let us carry him these five dirhems and beg him to buy thee therewith somewhat from the land of China, so haply thou mayest make a profit of it, by the Bounty of God the Most High !" I was too lazy to move ; but she swore by Allah that, except I rose and went with her, she would neither bring me meat nor drink nor come in to me, but would leave me to die of hunger and thirst. When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I knew she would do as she said ; so I said to her, "Help me to sit up." She did so, and I wept the while and said to her, "Bring me my shoes." Accordingly she brought them and I said, "Put them on my feet." She put them on my feet and I said, "Lift me up." So she lifted me up and I said, "Support me, that I may walk." So she supported me and I went along thus, still stumbling in my skirts till we came to the river-bank, where we saluted the Sheikh and I said to him, "O uncle, art thou Aboul Muzeffer?" "At thy service," answered he, and I said, "Take these dirhems and buy me somewhat from the land of China : haply God may vouchsafe me a profit of it." Quoth the Sheikh to his

¹ Dirhem.—Silver piece, worth about 10^d.

companions. "Do ye know this youth ?" "Yes" replied they ; "he is known as Mohammed the Lazy and we never saw him stir from his house till now." Then said he to me "O my son give me the dirhems and the blessing of God the Most High go with them !" So he took the money, saying, "In the name of God !" and I returned home with my mother.

Meanwhile the Sheikh set sail, with a company of merchants, and stayed not till they reached the land of China, where they bought and sold, and having done their intent, set out on their homeward voyage. When they had been three days at sea, the Sheikh said to his company, "Stay the ship !" And they asked what was to do with him. "Know," replied he, "that I have forgotten the commission with which Abou Mohammed the Lazy charged me; so let us turn back, that we may buy him somewhat whereby he may profit." "We conjure thee, by God the Most High," exclaimed they, "turn not back with us ; for we have traversed an exceeding great distance and endured sore hardship and many perils." Quoth he, "There is no help for it ;" and they said, "Take from us double the profit of the five dirhems and turn not back with us." So he agreed to this and they collected for him a great sum of money.

Then they sailed on, till they came to an island, wherein was much people ; so they moored thereto and the merchants went ashore, to buy thence precious metals and pearls and so forth. Presently, Aboul Muzaffer saw a man seated, with many apes before him, and amongst them one whose hair had been plucked off. As often as the man's attention was diverted from them, the other apes fell upon the plucked one and beat him and threw him on their master ; whereupon the latter rose and beat them and bound them and punished them for this ; and all the apes were wroth with the plucked ape therefor and beat him the more. When Aboul Muzaffer saw this, he took compassion upon the plucked ape and said to his master, "Wilt thou sell me yonder ape ?" "Buy," replied the man, and Aboul Muzaffer rejoined, I have with me five dirhems, belonging to an orphan lad. Wilt thou sell me the ape for that sum ?" "He is thine," answered the ape-merchant. "May God give thee a blessing of him !" So the Sheikh paid him the money and his slaves took the ape and tied him up in the ship.

Then they loosed sail and made for another island, where they cast anchor ; and there came down divers, who dived for

pearls and corals and other jewels. So the merchants hired them for money and they dived. When the ape saw this, he did himself loose from his bonds and leaping off the ship's side, dived with them; whereupon quoth Aboul Muzeffier, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High the Supreme ! The ape is lost to us, by the [ill] fortune of the poor fellow for whom we bought him." And they dispaired of him; but, after awhile, the company of divers rose to the surface, and with them the ape, with his hands full of jewels of price, which he threw down before Aboul Muzeffier who marvelled at this, and said, "There hangs some great mystery by this ape ! "

Then they cast off and sailed till they came to a third island called the Island of Zunouj¹, who are a people of the blacks that eat human flesh. When the blacks saw them, they boarded them in canoes and taking all in the ship, pinioned them and carried them to their king, who bade slaughter certain of the merchants. So they slaughtered them and ate their flesh; and the rest passed the night in prison and sore concern. But, when it was [mid]night, the ape arose and going up to Aboul Muzeffier, did off his bonds. When the others saw him free, they said, "God grant that our deliverance may be at thy hands, O Aboul Muzeffier!" But he replied, "Know that he who delivered me, by God's leave, was none other than this ape; and I buy my release of him at a thousand dinars." And we likewise," rejoined the merchants, "will pay him a thousand dinars each, if he release us." With this, the ape went up to them and loosed their bonds, one by one, till he had freed them all, when they made for the ship and boarding her, found all safe and nothing missing. So they cast off and set sail; and presently Aboul Muzeffier said to them, "O merchants, fulfil your promise to the ape." "We hear and obey," answered they and paid him a thousand dinars each, whilst Aboul Muzeffier brought out to him the like sum of his own monies, so that there was a great sum of money collected for the ape.

Then they fared on till they reached the city of Bassora, where their freinds came out to meet them; and when they had landed, the Sheikh said, "Where is Abou Mohammed the Lazy ?" The news reached my mother, who came to me, as I lay asleep, and said to me, "O my son, the Sheikh Aboul Muzeffier has come back and is now in the city; so go thou to him and salute him and enquire what he hath brought thee;

¹ Zunouj.—Zanzibar.

it may be God hath blessed thee with somewhat." "Lift me from the ground," quoth I, "and prop me up, whilst I walk to the river-bank." So she lifted me up and I went out and walked on, stumbling in my skirts, till I met the Sheikh, who exclaimed, at sight of me, "Welcome to him whose money has been the means of my delivery and that of these merchants, by the will of God the Most High! Take this ape that I bought for thee and carry him home and wait till I come to thee." So I took the ape, saying in myself, "By Allah, this is indeed rare merchandise!" and drove it home, where I said to my mother, "Whenever I lie down to sleep, thou biddest me rise and trade; see now this merchandise with thine own eyes."

Then I sat down, and presently up came Aboul Muzeffer's slaves and said to me, "Art thou Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" "Yes," answered I; and behold, Aboul Muzeffer appeared behind them. So I went up to him and kissed his hands; and he said to me, "Come with me to my house." "I hear and obey," answered I and followed him to his house, where he bade his servants bring me the money [and what not else the ape had earned me]. So they brought it and he said to me, "O my son, God hath blessed thee with this wealth, by way of profit on thy five dirhems." Then the slaves laid the treasure in chests, which they set on their heads, and Aboul Muzeffer gave me the keys of the chests, saying, "Go before the slaves to thy house; for all this wealth is thine." So I returned to my mother, who rejoiced in this and said to me, "O my son, God has blessed thee with this much wealth; so put off thy laziness and go down to the bazaar and sell and buy." So I shook off my sloth, and opened a bazaar, where the ape used to sit on the same divan with me, eating with me when I ate and drinking when I drank. But every day, he was absent from daybreak till noon-day, when he came back, bringing with him a purse of a thousand dinars, which he laid by my side, and sat down. Thus did he a great while, till I amassed much wealth, wherewith I bought houses and land and planted gardens and got me slaves, black and white and male and female.

One day as I sat in my shop, with the ape at my side, he began to turn right and left, and I said in myself, "What ails the beast?" Then God made the ape speak with a glib tongue, and he said to me, "O Abou Mohammed!" When I heard him speak, I was sore afraid; but he said to me, "Fear

not ; I will tell thee my case. Know that I am a Marid of the Jinn¹ and came to thee, because of thy poor estate : but to-day thou knowest not the tale of thy wealth ; and now I have a need of thee, wherein if thou do my will, it shall be well for thee." " What is it ? " asked I, and he said, " I have a mind to marry thee to a girl like the full moon." " How so ? " quoth I. " Tomorrow," replied he, " don thou thy richest clothes and mount thy mule, with the saddle of gold, and ride to the forage market. There enquire for the shop of the Sherif² and sit down beside him and say to him, ' I come to thee as suitor for thy daughter's hand.' If he say to thee, ' Thou hast neither money nor condition nor family,' pull out a thousand dinars and give them to him ; and if he ask more, give him more and tempt him with money." " I hear and obey," answered I : " to-morrow, if it please God, I will do thy bidding."

So on the morrow I donned my richest clothes and mounting my mule with trappings of gold, rode, attended by half a score slaves, black and white, to the forage market, where I found the Sherif sitting in his shop. I alighted and saluting him, seated myself beside him. Quoth he, " Haply thou hast some business with us, which we may have the pleasure of transacting ? " " Yes," answered I ; " I have business with thee." " And what is it ? " asked he. Quoth I, " I come to thee as suitor for thy daughter's hand." And he said, " Thou hast neither money nor condition nor family ;" whereupon I pulled out a thousand dinars of red gold and said to him. " This is my rank and family ; and him whom God bless and keep hath said, ' The best of ranks is wealth.' And how well saith the poet :

Whoso bath money, though it be but dirhems twain, his lips Have learnt
all manner speech and he can speak and fear no slight.
His brethren and his mates draw near and hearken to his word And
'mongst the folk thou seest him walk, a glad and prideful wight.
But for the money, in the which he glorieth on this wise, Thou'dst find
him, midst his fellow-men, in passing sorry plight.

¹ Marid of the Jinn.—The Jinn (genii) were supernatural beings, ruled by mighty kings, Marid, one of the tribes of the Jinn. Some of the Jinn were true-believers, i.e. followers of God and Mohammed ; others were wicked spirits.

² The word *Sherif* (*lit.* noble) signifies strictly a descendant of the martyr Husseini, son of the Khalif Ali ; but it is here used in the sense of " chief [of the bazaar]."

Yea, whensoe'er the rich man speaks, though in his speech he err, 'Thou hast not spoken a vain thing,' they say; 'indeed thou'rt right.' - But, for the poor man, an he speak, albeit he say sooth, They say, 'Thou liest,' and make void his speech and hold it light, For money, verily, in all the lands beneath the sun, With goodliness and dignity doth its possessors digt. A very tongue it is for him who would be eloquent And eke a weapon to his hand who hath a mind to fight.'

When he heard this, he bowed his head awhile, then, raising it, said, "If it must be so, I will have of thee other three thousand dinars." "I hear and obey," answered I and sent one of my servants to my house for the money. When he came back with it, I handed it to the Sherif, who rose and bidding his servants shut his shop, invited his brother merchants to the wedding; after which he carried me to his house and drew up the contract of marriage between his daughter and myself, saying to me, "After ten days, I will bring thee in to her." So I went home rejoicing and shutting myself up with the ape, told him what had passed; and he said, "Thou hast done well."

When the time apointed by the Sherif drew near, the ape said to me, "There is a thing I would fain have thee do for me; and after, thou shall have of me what thou wilt." "What is that?" asked I. Quoth he, "At the upper end of the bride chamber stands a cabinet, on whose door is a padlock of brass with the keys under it. Take the keys and open the cabinet, in which thou wilt find a coffer of iron, with four talismanic flags at its angles. In its midst is a brass basin full of money, wherein is tied a white cock with a cleft comb; and on one side of the coffer are eleven serpents and on the other a knife. Take the knife and kill the cock; cut away the flags and overturn the chest; then go back to the bride. This is what I have to ask of thee." "I hear and obey," answered I and betook myself to the Sherif's house.

As soon as I entered the bridechamber, I looked for the cabinet and found it even as the ape had described it. Then I went in to the bride and marvelled at her beauty and grace and symmetry, for indeed they were such as no tongue can set forth. So I rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy; and in the middle of the night, when she slept, I rose and taking the keys, opened the cabinet. Then I took the knife and killed the cock and threw down the flags and overturned the coffer, whereupon the girl awoke and seeing the closet open and the cock slain, exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but

in God the Most High, the Supreme ! The Marid hath gotten me ! " Hardly had she made an end of speaking, when the Marid came down upon the house and seizing the bride, flew away with her; whereupon there arose a great clamour and in came the Sherif, buffeting his face, " O Abou Mohammed," said he, " what is this thou hast done ? Is it thus thou requitest us ? I made the talisman in the cabinet in my fear for my daughter from this accursed one ; for these six years hath he sought to steal away the girl, but could not. But now there is no more abiding for thee with us ; so go thy ways."

So I went out and returned to my own house, where I made search for the ape, but could find no trace of him ; whereby I knew that he was the Marid, who had taken my wife and had tricked me into destroying the Talisman that hindered him from taking her, and repented, rending my clothes and buffeting my face ; and there was no land but was straitened upon me. So I made for the desert, knowing not whither I should go, and wandered on, absorbed in melancholy thought, till night overtook me. Presently, I saw two serpents fighting, a white one and a tawny. So I took up a stone and throwing it at the tawny serpent, which was the aggressor, killed it; Whereupon the white serpent made off but returned after awhile, accompanied by ten others of the same colour, which went up to the dead serpent and tore it in pieces, till but the head was left. Then they went their ways and I fell prostrate for weariness on the ground where I stood; but as I lay pondering my case, I heard a voice repeat the following verses, though I saw no one :

Let destiny with slackened rein its course appointed fare And lie thou down by night to sleep with heart devoid of care.
For, 'twixt the closing of the eyes and th' opening thereof, God hath it in His power to change a case from foul to fair.

When I heard this, great concern got hold of me and I was beyond measure troubled ; and I heard a voice from behind me repeat these verses also :

Muslim, whose guide's the Koran and his clue, Rejoice, for succour com-
eth thee unto.
Let not the wiles of Satan make thee rue, For we're a folk whose creed's
the One and True.

Then said I, " I conjure thee by Him whom thou worship-

pest, let me know who thou art!" Whereupon the unseen speaker appeared to me, in the likeness of a man, and said "Fear not; for the report of thy good deed hath reached us, and we are a people of the true-believing Jinn. So, if thou lack aught, let us know it, that we may have the pleasure of fulfilling thy need." "Indeed," answered I, "I am in sore need, for there hath befallen me a grievous calamity, whose like never yet befell man." Quoth he, "Surely thou art Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" And I answered, "Yes." "O Abou Mohammed," rejoined the genie, "I am the brother of the white serpent, whose enemy thou slewest. We are four brothers, by one father and mother, and we are all indebted to thee for thy kindness. Know that he who played this trick on thee, in the likeness of an ape, is a Marid of the Marids of the Jinn; and had he not used this artifice, he had never been able to take the girl; for he hath loved her and had a mind to take her this long while, but could not win at her, being hindered of the talisman; and had it remained as it was, he could never have done so. However, fret not thyself for that; we will bring thee to her and kill the Marid; for thy kindness is not lost upon us."

Then he cried out with a terrible voice, and behold there appeared a company of Jinn, of whom he enquired concerning the ape; and one of them said, "I know his abiding place; it is in the City of Brass,¹ upon which the sun rises not." Then said the first genie to me, "O Abou Mohammed, take one of these our slaves, and he will carry thee on his back and teach thee how you shall get back the girl: but know that he is a Marid and beware lest thou utter the name of God whilst he is carrying thee, or he will flee from thee, and thou wilt fall and be destroyed." "I hear and obey," answered I and I chose out one of the slaves, who bent down and said to me, "Mount." So I mounting his back, and he flew up with me into the air, till I lost sight of the earth and saw the stars as they were fixed mountains and heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, what while the Marid held me in converse, diverting me and hindering me from pronouncing the name of God. But as we flew, behold, one clad in green raiment,

¹ City of Brass.—There is a story in the *Nights* called "The City of Brass" Payne's Edition, Vol. 5, p. 219. It contains many references to the king of the Jinn, Ed-Dimiryat. In the story of Kemerezzeman and Budour, Payne's *Nights*, Vol. iii., p. 100, we read of Ed-Dimiryat's daughter Maimounah.

with streaming tresses and radiant face, holding in his hand a javelin whence issued sparks of fire, accosted me, saying, "O Abou Mohammed, say, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is His apostle;' or I will smite thee with this javelin."

Now I was already sick at heart of my [forced] abstention from calling on the name of God; so I said, "There is no god but God and Mohammed is His apostle." Whereupon the shining one smote the Marid with his javelin and he melted away and became ashes; whilst I was precipitated from his back and fell headlong toward the earth, till I dropped into the midst of a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. Hard by where I fell was a ship and five sailors therein, who, seeing me, made for me and took me up into the boat. They began to speak to me in some tongue I knew not; but I signed to them that I understood not their speech. So they fared on till ended day, when they cast out a net and caught a great fish and roasting it, gave me to eat; after which they sailed on, till they reached their city and carried me into their king, who understood Arabic. So I kissed the ground before him and he bestowed on me a dress of honour and made me one of his officers. I asked him the name of the city, and he replied, "It is called Henad¹ and is in the land of China." Then he committed me to his Vizier, bidding him show me the city which was formerly peopled by infidels, till God the most High turned them into stones; and there I abode a month's space, diverting myself with viewing the place, nor saw I ever greater plenty of trees and fruits than there.

One day, as I sat on the bank of a river, there accosted me a horseman, who said to me, "Art not thou Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" "Yes," answered I; whereupon, "Fear not," said he; "for the report of thy good deed hath reached us." Quoth I, "Who art thou?" And he answered, "I am the brother of the white serpent, and thou art hard by the place where is the damsel whom thou seekest." So saying he took off his [outer] clothes and clad me therein, saying, "Fear not, for he, that perished under thee, was one of our slaves." Then he took me up behind him and rode on with me, till we came to a desert place, when he said to me, "Alight now and walk on between yonder mountains till thou seest the City of Brass; then halt afar off and enter it not, till I return to thee and teach thee how thou shalt do." "I hear and obey," replied I and alighting, walked on till I came to the city,

¹ Henad.—An imaginary city

the walls whereof I found of brass. I went round about it, looking for a gate, but found none; and presently, the serpent's brother rejoined me and gave me a charmed sword that should hinder any one from seeing me, then went his way.

He had been gone but a little while, when I heard a noise of cries and found myself in the midst of a multitude of folk whose eyes were in their breasts. Quoth they, "Who art thou and what brings thee hither?" So I told them my story and they said, "The girl thou seekest is in the city with the Marid; but we know not what he hath done with her. As for us, we are brethren of the white serpent. But go to yonder spring and note where the water enters, and enter thou with it; for it will bring thee into the city." I did as they bade me and followed the water-course, till it brought me to a grotto under the earth, from which I ascended and found myself in the midst of the city. Here I saw the damsel seated upon a throne of gold, under a canopy of brocade, midmost a garden full of trees of gold, whose fruits were jewels of price, such as rubies and chrysolites and pearls and coral.

When she saw me, she knew me and accosted me with the [obligatory] salutation, saying, "O my lord, who brought thee hither?" So I told her all that had passed, and she said, "Know that the accursed Marid, of the greatness of his love for me, hath told me what doth him hurt and what profit and that there is here a talisman by means whereof he could, an he would, destroy this city and all that are therein. It is in the likeness of an eagle, with I know not what written on it, and whoso possesses it, the Afrits¹ will do his commandment in everything. It stands upon a column in such a place; so go thou thither and take it. Then set it before thee and taking a chafing-dish, throw into it a little musk, whereupon there will arise a smoke, that will draw all the Afrits to thee, and they will all present themselves before thee, nor shall one be absent; and whatsoever thou biddest them, that will they do. Arise therefore and do this thing, with the blessing of God the Most High."

"I hear and obey," answered I and going to the column, did what she bade me, whereupon the Afrits presented themselves, saying, "Here are we, O our Lord! Whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do." Quoth I, "Bind the Marid that brought the damsel hither." "We hear and obey," answered they and disappearing, returned after awhile and informed me

¹ Afrit.—A variety of Jinn.

that they had done my bidding. Then I dismissed them and returning to my wife, told her what had happened and said to her, "Wilt thou go with me?" "Yes," answered she. So I carried her forth of the city, by the underground channel, and we fared on, till we fell in with the folk who had shown me the way into the city. I besought them to teach me how I should return to my native land; so they brought us to the sea shore and set us aboard a ship, which sailed on with us with a fair wind, till we reached the city of Bassora. Here we landed, and I carried my wife to her father's house; and when her people saw her, they rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Then I fumigated the eagle with musk and the Afrits flocked to me from all sides, saying, "At thy service; what wilt thou have us do?" I bade them transport all that was in the City of Brass of gold and silver and jewels and precious things to my house in Bassora, which they did; and I then ordered them to fetch the ape. So they brought him before me, abject and humiliated, and I said to him, "O accursed one, why hast thou dealt thus perfidiously with me?" Then I commanded the Afrits to shut him in a brazen vessel: so they put him in a strait vessel of brass and sealed it with lead. But I abode with my wife in joy and delight; and now O Commander of the Faithful, I have under my hand such a store of precious things and rare jewels and other treasure as neither reckoning may comprise nor measure suffice unto. All this is of the bounty of God the Most High, and if thou desire aught of money or what not, I will bid the Jinn bring it to thee forthright.

The Khalif wondered greatly at this story and bestowed on him royal gifts, in exchange for his presents, and entreated him with the favour he deserved.

THE MOCK KHALIF.¹

It is related that the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, being one night troubled with a persistent restlessness, summoned his Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide and said to him, 'My heart is straightened and I have a mind to divert myself to night by walking about the streets of Baghdad and looking into the affairs of the folk; but we will disguise ourselves as merchants, that none may know us.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer. So they rose at once and putting off the rich clothes they wore, donned merchants' habits and sallied forth, the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour the headsman. They walked from place to place, till they came to the Tigris and saw an old man sitting in a boat; so they went up to him and saluting him, said, 'O old man, we desire thee of thy favour to carry us a-pleasuring down the river, in this thy boat, and take this dinar to thy hire.' 'Who may go a-pleasuring on the Tigris?' replied the boatman. 'Seeing that the Khalif every night comes down the stream in his barge, and with him one crying aloud, "Ho, all ye people, great and small, gentle and simple, men and boys, whoso is found in a boat on the Tigris [by night], I will strike off his head or hang him to the mast of his boat!" And ye had well nigh met him; for here comes his barge.' But the Khalif and Jaafer said, 'Old man, take these two dinars, and when thou seest the Khalif's barge approaching, run us under one of the arches, that we may hide there till he has passed.' 'Hand over the money,' replied the boatman; 'and on God the Most High be our dependence!' So they gave him the two dinars and embarked in the boat; and he put off and rowed about with them awhile, till they saw the barge coming down the river in mid-stream, with lighted flambeaux and cressets therein. Quoth the boatman, 'Did I not tell you that the Khalif passed every night? O Protector, remove not the veils of Thy protection!' So saying, he ran the boat under an arch and threw a piece of black cloth over the Khalif and his companions, who looked out from under the covering and saw, in the bows of the barge, a

¹ Payne's *Arabian Nights*, Vol. iii., p. 350.

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three, donning merchants' habits, went out at the privy gate and made their way through the city, in great glee, till they came to the Tigris, where they found the boatman sitting, waiting for them. They embarked with him in the boat and had not sat long, before up came the mock Khalif's barge, with the cresset-bearers crying aloud as of wont, and in it two hundred white slaves other than those of the previous night. 'O Vizier,' exclaimed the Khalif, 'had I heard tell of this, I had not believed it; but I have seen it with my own eyes.' Then said he to the boatman, 'Take these ten dinars and row us along abreast of them, for they are in the light and we in the shade, and we can see them and divert ourselves by looking on them, but they cannot see us.' So he took the money and pushing off, followed in the shadow of the barge, till they came among the gardens, and the barge cast anchor before a postern door, where they saw servants standing with a mule saddled and bridled. Here the mock Khalif landed and mounting the mule, rode away with his boon-companions, attended by his suite and preceded by the cresset-bearers crying aloud. Then Haroun and Jaafer and Mesrour landed also and making their way through the press of servants, walked on before them. Presently, the cresset-bearers espied them and seeing three strangers in merchants' habits, misdoubted of them; so they pointed them out and caused bring them before the mock Khalif, who looked at them and said, 'How come ye here at this hour?' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'we are foreign merchants, who arrived here this day and were out a-walking to-night, when ye came up and these men laid hands on us and brought us before thee.' Quoth the mock Khalif, 'Since you are strangers, no harm shall befall you; but had ye been of Baghdad, I had struck off your heads.' Then he turned to his Vizier and said to him, 'Take these men with thee; for they are our guests this night.' 'I hear and obey, O our lord,' answered he; and they followed him, till they came to a lofty and splendid palace of curious ordinance, such as no king possesses, rising from the dust and laying hold upon the margees of the clouds. Its door was of teak, inlaid with glittering gold, and by it one passed into a saloon, amiddleward which was a basin of water, with an artificial fountain rising from its midst. It was furnished with carpets and cushions and divans of brocade and tables and other gear such as amazed the wit and defied description. There, also, was a curtain drawn, and upon the door were written these two verses :

A palace, upon it be blessing and greeting and grace ! Fair fortune hath
put off her beauty to brighten the place.
Therein are all manner of marvels and rarities found ; The penmen are
puzzled in story its charms to retrace.

The mock Khalif entered with his company and sat down on a throne of gold, set with jewels and covered with a prayer-carpet of yellow silk ; whilst the boon-companions took their seats and the sword-bearer stood before him. Then the servants laid the tables and they ate and washed their hands, after which the dishes were removed and the wine service set on, with cups and flagons in due order. The cup went round till it came to Er Reshid, who refused it, and the mock Khalif said to Jaafer, 'What ails thy friend that he drinks not ?' 'O our lord,' replied the Vizier, 'this long while he hath drunk no wine.' Quoth the mock Khalif, 'I have drink other than this, a kind of apple-wine, that will suit him.' So he let bring apple-sherbet and said to Haroun, 'Drink thou of this, as often as it comes to thy turn.' Then they continued to drink and make merry, till the wine rose to their heads and mastered their wits ; and Haroun said to Jaafer, 'O Jaafer, by Allah, we have no such vessels as these. Would God I knew what manner of man this is !' Presently, the young man glanced at them and seeing them talking privily, said, 'It is unmannerly to whisper.' 'No rudeness was meant,' answered Jaafer. 'My friend did say to me, "Verily I have travelled in most countries and have caroused and companied with the greatest of kings and captains ; yet never saw I a goodlier ordinance than this nor passed a more delightful night ; save that the people of Baghdad say, 'Drink without music often leaves headache.'"' When the mock Khalif heard this, he smiled merrily and struck a gong¹ with a rod he had in his hand ; whereupon a door opened and out came an eunuch, bearing a stool of ivory, inlaid with glittering gold, and followed by a damsel of surpassing beauty and symmetry. He set down the stool and the damsel seated herself on it, as she were the sun shining in a cloudless sky. In her hand she had a lute of Indian make, which she laid in her lap and bending over it as a mother bends over her child, preluded in four-and-twenty modes, amazing all wits. Then she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses to a lively measure :

¹ *Medewwerch*, lit. "something round." This word generally means a small round cushion ; but in the present instance, a gong is evidently referred to.

The tongue of passion in my heart bespeaketh thee of me And giveth thee
to know that I enamoured am of thee.
The burning of an anguished heart is witness to my pain And ulcerated
eyes and tears that flow incessantly.
I had no knowledge what Love was, before the love of thee; But God's
forewritten ordinance o'ertaketh all that be.

When the mock Khalif heard this, he gave a great cry and rent his robe to the skirt, whereupon they let down a curtain over him and brought him a fresh robe, handsomer than the first. He put it on and sat as before, till the cup came round to him, when he struck the gong a second time and behold, a door opened and out came an eunuch with a chair of gold, followed by a damsel handsomer than the first, bearing a lute, such as mortified the heart of the envious. She sat down on the chair and sang to the lute these verses :

Ah, how can I be patient, when longing in my soul Flames high and from
mine eyelids the tears in torrents roll?
Life hath no sweet, by Allah, wherein I may rejoice. How shall a heart
be joyous, that's all fulfilled of dole?

No sooner did the youth hear this than he gave a great cry and rent his clothes to the skirt ; whereupon they let down the curtain over him and brought him another dress. He put it on and sitting up as before, fell again to cheerful talk, till the cup came round to him, when he smote once more upon the gong and out came an eunuch with a chair, followed by a damsel fairer than she who had foregone her. So she sat down on the chair, with a lute in her hand, and sang thereto the following verses :

Have done with your disdain and leave to make me rue ; For, by your
life, my heart to you was ever true !
Have ruth on one distraught, the bondslave of your love, Sorry and sick
and full of longings ever new.
Sickness, for passion's stress, hath wasted him to nought, And still for
your consent to Allah he doth sue.
O ye full moons, whose place of sojourn is my heart, Amongst the human
race whom can I choose but you ?

At this the young man gave a great cry and rent his clothes, whereupon they let fall the curtain over him and they brought him other clothes. Then he returned to his former case with his boon companions and the cup went round as before, till

it came to him, when he struck the gong a fourth time and the door opening, out came a boy, bearing a chair and followed by a damsel. He set the chair for her and she sat down upon it and taking the lute, tuned it and sang to it these verses :

When, when will separation and hatred pass away
And what is past of joyance come back to make me gay?
But yesterday, in gladness, one dwelling held us both ; We saw the en-
viers napping, all heedless of their prey.
But fortune played the traitor with us and sundered us, And left our
dwelling-places even as the desert grey.
Wilt have me, O my censor, be solaced for my loves? Alas, my heart
the censor, I see, will not obey!
So make an end of chiding and leave me to my love ; For of my loved
one's converse my heart is full alway.
Fair lords, though you've been fickle and broken faith and troth, Deem
not my heart for absence forgets you night or day.

When the mock Khalif heard the girl's song, he gave a great cry and tearing his clothes as before, fell down in a swoon ; whereupon they would have let down the curtain over him, as of wont ; but the cords stuck fast and Er Reshid, chancing to look at him, saw on his body the marks of beating with palm-rods and said to Jaafer, 'By Allah, he is a handsome youth, but a foul thief !' 'Whence knowest thou that, O Commander of the Faithful ?' asked Jaafer, and the Khalif answered, 'Sawst thou not the marks of whips on his sides ?' Then they let fall the curtain over him and brought him a fresh dress, which he put on and sat up as before with his courtiers. Presently, he saw the Khalif and Jaafer whispering together and said to them, 'What is the matter, gentlemen ?' 'Nothing, my lord,' replied Jaafer, 'save that my friend here, who (as is not unknown to thee) is of the merchants and hath visited all the great cities and countries of the world and foregathered with kings and men of worth, saith to me, "Verily, that which our lord the Khalif hath done this night is beyond measure extravagant, never saw I any do the like of his fashion in any country ; for he hath rent his four dresses, each worth a thousand dinars, and this is surely excessive extravagance."'" 'O man,' replied the youth, 'the money is my money and the stuff my stuff, and this is by way of largesse to my servants and followers ; for each suit that is rent belongeth to one of my boon-companions here present and I appoint him, in exchange therefor, [if it is so like him,] the sum of five hundred

dinars.' 'Well is that thou dost, O our lord !' answered Jaaffer and recited the following verses :

The virtues sure have built themselves a dwelling in thy palm ; Thou hast thy wealth to all mankind made common property.
An if the virtues' doors were shut on us one luckless day, Thy hand unto their locks, indeed, were even as a key.

When the young man heard these verses, he ordered Jaafer a thousand dinars and a dress of honour. Then the cup went round among them and the wine was pleasant to them ; but, after a while, the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Ask him of the marks on his ribs, that we may see what he will say.' 'Softly, O my lord,' replied Jaafer ; 'be not hasty, for patience is more becoming.' 'By the life of my head and by the tomb of El Abbas,' rejoined the Khalif, 'except thou ask him, I will assuredly make an end of thee !' With this the young man turned towards Jaafer and said to him, 'What ails thee and thy friend to be whispering together ? Tell me what is to do with you.' 'It is nothing,' replied Jaafer ; but the mock Khalif rejoined, I conjure thee, by Allah, tell me what ails you and hide from me nothing of your case,' 'O my lord,' answered the Vizier, 'my companion here saw on thy sides the marks of beating with whips and rods and marvelled thereat exceedingly, saying, "How came the Khalif to be beaten ?" And he would fain know the cause of this, When the youth heard this, he smiled and said, 'Know that my story is wonderful and my case extraordinary ; were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as an admonition to him who can profit by admonition.' And he sighed and repeated the following verses :

Strange is my story and outdoes all marvels that can be. By Love itself
I swear, my ways are straitened upon me !
And ye would know my case, give ear and hearken to my tale And all be
dumb, on every side, in this our company.
Take heed unto my speech, for lo ! therein a warning is ; Ay. and my
words no leasing are, but naked verity,
I am a man of passion slain, the victim of desire, And she who slew me
fairer is than all the stars to see.
A bright black eye she hath, whose glance is as an Indian sword, And
from her eyebrows' bended bows full many a shaft shoots she.

¹ The Prophet's uncle, from whom the Abbaside Khalifs were descended.

My heart forbodes me that 'mongst you the Khalif of the age, Our Imam¹
 is, of high descent and noble pedigree,
 And that the second of you he, that's known as Jaafer, is, His vizier and a
 vizier's son, a lord of high degree,
 Yea, and the third of you Mesrour the eunuch is, I ween, The swordsman
 of his vengeance. So, if true my saying be,
 I have of this my case attained to all for which I hoped And hearts' con-
 tent from every side is come, indeed, to me.

When they heard this, Jaafer swore to him a dissembling oath that they were not those he named ; whereupon he laughed and said, ' Know, O my lords, that I am not the Commander of the Faithful and that I do but style myself thus, to get my will of the people of the city. My real name is Mohammed Ali son of Ali the Jeweller and my father was one of the chief men [of the city]. When he died, he left me great store of gold and silver and pearls and corals and rubies and chrysolites and other jewels, besides houses and lands and baths and gardens and orchards and shops and brickfields and slaves, male and female. One day, as I sat in my shop, surrounded by my slaves and servants, there came up a young lady, riding on a mule and attended by three damsels like moons. She alighted at my shop and seating herself by me, said to me, "Art thou Mohammed the jeweller?" "Yes," answered I, "I am he, at thy service." "Hast thou a necklace of jewels fit for me?" asked she, and I replied, "O my lady, I will show thee what I have ; and if any please thee, it will be of thy slave's good luck; if not, of his ill-fortune." I had by me a hundred necklaces and showed them all to her ; but none of them pleased her and she said, "I want a better than those I have seen." Now I had a small necklace, that my father had bought for a hundred thousand dinars and the like whereof was not to be found with any of the great kings ; so I said to her, "O my lady, I have yet one necklace of fine stones, whose like none possesseth, great or small." "Show it me," said she. So I showed it her and she said, "This is what I sought and what I have wished for all my life. What is its price?" Quoth I, "It cost my father a hundred thousand dinars ;" and she said, "I will give thee five thousand dinars to thy profit." "O my lady," answered I, "the necklace and its owner are at thy service and I cannot gainsay thee [in aught]." "Not so," rejoined she ; "needs must

¹ *Lit.* "fugleman," i.e. "leader of the people at prayer," a title bestowed upon the Khalifs, in recognition of their spiritual headship.

thou have the profit, and I am still much beholden to thee." Then she rose and mounting the mule in haste, said to me, "O my lord, in God's name, favour us with thy company, to receive the money; for this day is a milk-white day¹ with us." So I shut the shop and accompanied her, in all security, till we came to a house, on which were manifest the signs of fortune. Its door was wrought with gold and silver and lapis lazuli, and thereon were written these verses;

May mourning never enter thee, I pray, O house, nor fortune e'er thy lord
bewray!
A goodly sojourn art thou to the guest. When strait on him is every place
and way.

She dismounted and entered the house, bidding me sit down on the stone bench at the door, till the money-changer should come. So I sat awhile, till presently a damsels came out to me and said, "O my lord, enter the vestibule; for it is not seemly that thou shouldst sit at the door." Accordingly, I entered the vestibule and sat down on the settle there. As I sat, another damsels came out and said to me, "O my lord, my mistress bids thee enter and sit down at the door of the saloon, to receive thy money." So I entered and sat down, nor had I sat a moment, before a curtain of silk was drawn aside and I saw the lady seated on a throne of gold, with the necklace about her neck, unveiled and showing a face as it were the round of the moon. At this sight, my wit was troubled and my mind confounded, by reason of her exceeding beauty and grace; but, when she saw me, she rose and coming up to me, said, "O light of my eyes, is every handsome one like thee pitiless to his mistress?" "O my lady," answered I, "beauty, all of it, is in thee and is one of thine attributes." "O jeweller," rejoined she, "know tha I love thee and can hardly credit that I have brought thee hither." Then she bent to me and I kissed her, and she kissed me and drawing me toward her, pressed me to her bosom. "O my lord," she said, "dost thou think to foregather with me unlawfully? By Allah, may he not live who would do the like of this sin! Knowest thou who I am?" "No, by Allah, O my lady!" replied I, Quoth she, "I am the lady Dunya, daughter of Yehya ben Khalid the Barmecide an sister to Jaafer, the Khalif's Vizier." When I heard this,d

¹ Dies albâ lapide notanda.

A moon, in your tents that rises, to Allah I commend, One my heart loves
and tenders, shut in from the sight of her swain.
Anon she is kind, anon angry : how goodly her coquetry is ! For all that
is done of a loved one must needs to her lover be fain.

When I had finished, she said to me, "God assain thy body and sweeten thy voice ! Verily, thou are perfect in beauty and good breeding and singing. But now rise and return to thy place, ere the lady Dunya come back, lest she find thee not and be wroth with thee." So I kissed the earth before her and the old woman forewent me to the door whence I came. I entered and going up to the couch, found that my wife had come back and was lying asleep there. So I sat down at her feet and rubbed them ; whereupon she opened her eyes and seeing me, drew up her feet and gave me a kick that threw me off the couch, saying, "O traitor, thou hast been false to thine oath and has perjured thyself. Thou sworest to me that thou wouldst not stir from thy place ; yet didst thou break thy promise and go to the lady Žubeideh. By Allah, but that I fear scandal, I would pull down her palace over her head !" Then said she to her black slave. "Harkye, Sewab, arise and strike off this lying traitor's head, for we have no further need of him." So the slave came up to me and tearing a strip from his skirt, bound my eyes with it and would have cut off my head ; but all her women, great and small, came up to her and said to her, "O our lady, this is not the first who hath erred : indeed, he knew not thy humour and hath done nothing deserving of death." "By Allah," replied she, "I must needs set my mark on him." And she bade beat me ; so they beat me on my sides, and the marks ye saw are the scars of that beating. Then she bade them put me out, and they carried me to a distance from the house and cast me down. I rose and dragged myself little by little to my own house, where I sent for a surgeon, who dressed my wounds and comforted me. As soon as I was recovered and my pains and sickness had left me, I went to the bath and thence betaking myself to my shop, sold all that was therein. With the proceeds, I bought four hundred white slaves, such as no king ever got together, and caused two hundred of them ride out with me every day. Then I made me yonder barge, on which I spent five thousand dinars, and styled myself Khalif and appointed each of my servants to the charge and clad him in the habit of some one of the Khalif's officers. Moreover, I let cry abroad, "Whoso goeth a-pleasuring on the Tigris [by night],

I will strike off his head without mercy : " and on this wise have I done this whole year past, during which time I have heard no news of the lady neither happened upon any trace of her.' And he wept copiously and repeated the following verses :

By Allah, I will never all my life long forget her, my dear ; And those only will I tender, who shall bring her to me to draw near.
Now glory to her Maker and Creator be given evermore ! As the full moon in the heavens, in her aspect and her gait she doth appear.
She, indeed, hath made me weariful and wakeful, full of sorrow, sick for love ; Yea, my heart is all confounded at her beauty, dazed for trouble and for fear.

When Er Reshid heard the young man's story and knew the passion and transport and love-longing that afflicted him, he was moved to compassion and wonder and said, ' Glory be to God who hath appointed to every thing a cause ! ' Then they craved the young man's leave to depart ; which being granted, they took leave of him, the Khalif purposing to do him justice and entreat him with the utmost munificence, and returned to the palace of the Khalifate, where they changed their clothes for others befitting their station and sat down, whilst Mesrour stood before them. After awhile, the Khalif said to Jaafer, ' O Vizier, bring me the young man with whom we were last night.' ' I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer, and going to the youth, saluted him, saying, ' The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' So he returned with him to the palace, in great concern by reason of the summons, and going in to the Khalif, kissed the earth before him. Then said he, ' Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful and Protector of the people of the Faith ! ' And offered up a prayer for the endurance of his glory and prosperity, for the accomplishment of his desires and the continuance of his bounty and the cessation of evil and punishment, ordering his speech as best he might and ending by repeating the following verses :

Still may thy threshold as a place of adoration¹ Be sought and on men's brows its dusk bespeak prostration,
That so in every land be made this proclamation, " Thou, thou art Abraham and this his very station." ²

¹ Lit. *Kaabeh*.

² Referring to the station in the Temple of Mecca, known as the *Mecam* or standing-place of Abraham. The wish inferred is that the Khalif's court may be as favourite a place of reverent resort as the station in question.

The Khalif smiled in his face and returned his salute, looking on him with the eye of favour. Then he bade him draw near and sit down before him and said to him, 'O Mohammed Ali, I wish thee to tell me what befell thee last night, for it was rare and passing strange.' 'Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied the youth. 'Give me the handkerchief of immunity, that my trouble may be appeased and my heart set at rest.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Thou art safe from fear and trouble.' So the young man told him his story from first to last, whereby the Khalif knew him to be a lover and severed from his beloved and said to him, 'Wilt thou that I restore her to thee?' 'This were of the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful,' answered the youth and repeated the following verses :

Kiss thou his finger-tips, for no mere fingers they, But keys to all the goods
by God to men assigned ;
And praise his deeds no less, for no mere deeds are they, But jewels to
adorn the necks of humankind.

Thereupon the Khalif turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Bring me thy sister the lady Dunya.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and fetched her forthright. When she stood before the Khalif, he said to her, 'Dost thou know who this is?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'how should women have knowledge of men?' The Khalif smiled and said, 'O Dunya, this is thy beloved, Mohammed ben Ali the jeweller. We are acquainted with his case, for we have heard the whole story, from beginning to end, and apprehended its inward and its outward; and it is no more hidden, for all it was kept secret.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined she, 'this was written in the book of destiny. I crave the forgiveness of the Most High God for that which I have done and beseech thee to pardon me of thy favour.' At this the Khalif laughed and summoning the Cadi and the witnesses renewed the marriage-contract between Dunya and her husband, whereby there betided them the utmost of felicity and those who envied them were mortified. Moreover, he made Mohammed Ali one of his boon-companions, and they abode in joy and cheer and gladness, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

THE MAN WHO STOLE THE DISH OF GOLD IN WHICH THE DOG ATE.¹

There was once a man, who was overborne with debt, and his case was straitened upon him, so that he left his people and family and went forth in distraction. He wandered on at random till he came to a high-walled and splendidly built city and entered it in a state of wretchedness and despair, gnawed with hunger and worn with the toil of his journey. As he passed through one of the streets, he saw a company of notables going along ; so he followed them, till they entered a house like to a royal palace. He entered with them, and they stayed not till they came in presence of a man of the most dignified and majestic aspect, seated at the upper end of a saloon and surrounded by pages and servants, as he were of the sons of the Viziers. When he saw the visitors, he rose and received them with honour ; but the poor man was confounded at the goodliness of the place and the crowd of servants and attendants, and drawing back, in fear and perplexity sat down apart in a place afar off, where none should see him.

After awhile, in came a man with four hunting-dogs, clad in various kinds of silk and brocade² and having on their necks collars of gold with chains of silver, and tied up each dog in a place set apart for him ; after which he went out and presently returned with four dishes of gold, full of rich meats, one of which he set before each dog. Then he went away and left them, whilst the poor man began to eye the food, for stress of hunger, and would fain have gone up to one of the dogs and eaten with him ; but fear of them withheld him. Presently, one of the dogs looked at him and God the Most High inspired him with a knowledge of his case ; so he drew back from the platter and beckoned to the man, who came and ate, till he was satisfied. Then he would have withdrawn, but the dog pushed the dish towards him with his paw, signifying to him to take it and what was left in it for himself. So the man

¹ Payne's *Arabian Nights*, Vol. iv., p. III.

² Brocade.—In the east valuable dogs are often clothed.

took the dish and leaving the house, went his way, and none followed him. Then he journeyed to another city, where he sold the dish and buying goods with the price, returned to his own town. There he sold his stock and paid his debts ; and he prospered and became rich and at his ease.

After some years had passed, he said to himself, ‘Needs must I repair to the city of the owner of the dish, which the dog bestowed on me, and carry him its price, together with a fit and handsome present.’ So he took the price of the dish and a suitable present and setting out, journeyed night and day, till he came to the city and entering, went straight to the place where the man’s house had been ; but lo, he found there nothing but mouldering ruins and dwelling-places laid waste over which the raven croaked ; for the place was desert and the environs changed out of knowledge. At this, his heart and soul were troubled and he repeated the words of him who saith :

The privy chambers are void of all their hidden store,
As hearts of the fear
of God and the virtues all of yore.
Changed is the vale and strange to me are its gazelles, And those I know
of old its sandhills are no more.

And those of another :

The phantom of Suada¹ came to me by night, near the break of day, And roused me, whenas my comrades all in the desert sleeping lay. But, when I awoke to the dream of the night, that came to visit me, I found the air void and the wonted place of our rendezvous far away.

When he saw what the hand of time had manifestly done with the place, leaving but traces of the things that had been aforetime, the testimony of his eyes made it needless for him to enquire of the case ; so he turned away and seeing a wretched man, in a plight that made the skin quake and would have moved the very rock to pity, said to him, ‘Harkye, sirrah ! What have time and fortune done with the master of this place Where are his shining full moons² and splendid stars ;² and what is the cause of the ruin that is come upon his abode so

¹ Suada.—Referring to any lady. One’s sweetheart. Curiously enough the verses in the *Nights* have not necessarily any particular connection with the text.

² i.e. his beautiful slave-girls.

that but the walls thereof remain?' Quoth the other, 'He is the miserable wretch thou seest bewailing that which hath befallen him. Knowest thou not the words of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), wherein is a lesson to him who will profit by it and an admonition to whoso will be guided thereby in the right way? "Verily it is the way of God the Most High to raise up nothing of this world, except He cast it down again." If thou enquire of the cause of this thing, indeed, it is no wonder, considering the vicissitudes of fortune. I was the master of this place and its builder and founder and owner and lord of its shining full moons and radiant damsels and of all its splendid circumstance and magnificent garniture; but Fortune turned and did away from me wealth and servants, overwhelming me unawares with disasters unforeseen and bringing me to this sorry plight. But there must needs be some reason for this thy question; tell it me and leave wondering.'

So the other told him the whole story, sore concerned at what he had heard and saw, and added, 'I have brought thee a present, such as souls desire, and the price of thy dish of gold, that I took; for it was the cause of my becoming rich, after poverty, and of the reinstating of my dwelling-place after desolation, and of the doing away of my trouble and straitness from me.' But the poor man shook his head, groaning and weeping and lamenting, and answered, 'O man, methinks thou art mad; for this is not the fashion of a man of understanding. How should a dog of mine make gift to thee of a dish of gold and I receive back its price? This were indeed a strange thing! By Allah, were I in the straitest misery and unease, I would not accept of thee aught, no, not the worth of a nail-paring! So return whence thou camest, in health and safety.

The merchant kissed his feet and taking leave of him returned whence he came, praising him and reciting the following verse:

The men and eke the dogs are gone and vanished all. Peace be upon the men and dogs, whate'er befall!

THE RUINED MAN OF BAGHDAD AND HIS SLAVE-GIRL.¹

There was once at Baghdad, of old time, a man of condition, who had inherited wealth galore from his father. He fell in love with a slave-girl ; so he bought her and she loved him as he loved her ; and he ceased not to spend upon her, till all his wealth was gone and nought remained thereof ; wherefore he sought a means of getting his livelihood, but availed not thereunto. Now he had been used, in the days of his wealth, to frequent the assemblies of those who were versed in the art of singing and had thus attained to the utmost skill therein. So he took counsel with one of his friends, who said to him, ‘Meseems thou canst not do better than sing, thou and thy slave-girl, [for your living] ; for on this wise thou wilt get money in plenty and wilt eat and drink.’ But he disliked this, he and the damsels, and she said to him, ‘I have be-thought me of a means of relief for thee.’ ‘What is it ?’ asked he and she said, ‘Do thou sell me ; so shall we win quit of this strait, thou and I, and I shall be in affluence ; for none will buy the like of me save a man of fortune, and with this I will contrive for my return to thee.’

So he carried her to the market and the first who saw her was a Hashimi² of Bassora, a man of taste and breeding and generosity, who bought her for fifteen hundred dinars. (Quoth the young man, the girl’s owner), When I had received the price, I repented me and wept, I and the damsels ; and I sought to cancel the sale ; but the purchaser would not consent. So I took the money in a bag, knowing not whither I should go, now my house was desolate of her, and buffeted my face and wept and wailed as I had never done. Then I

¹ Payne’s *Arabian Nights*, Vol. viii., p. 175.

² A descendant of Hashim, great-grandfather of Mohammed, and therefore a kinsman of the Abbaside Khalifs, who were directly descended from him. The Khalifs of the Ommiade dynasty were somewhat less directly akin to the Prophet, being the descendants of Hashim’s brother Abdus-shems.

entered a mosque and sat weeping, till I was stupefied and losing my senses, fell asleep, with the bag of money under my head for a pillow. Presently, before I could be ware, a man pulled the bag from under my head and ran off with it : whereupon I started up in affright and would have run after him ; but lo, my feet were bound with a rope and I fell on my face. So I fell a-weeping and buffeting myself, saying, 'Thy soul ¹ hath left thee and thy wealth is lost !' Then, of the excess of my chagrin, I betook myself to the Tigris and wrapping my face in my gown, cast myself into the river.

The bystanders saw me and said, 'Sure, [he hath done] this because of some great trouble that hath betide him,' So they cast themselves in after me and bringing me ashore, questioned me of my case. I told them what had befallen me and they condoled with me. Then an old man of them came to me and said, 'Thou hast lost thy money, but why goest thou about to do away thy life and become of the people of the fire ?² Arise, come with me, that I may see thine abode.' So I went with him to my house and he sat with me awhile, till I became calmer, when I thanked him and he went away. When he was gone, I was like to kill myself, but bethought me of the life to come and the fire ; so I fled forth my house to one of my friends and told him what had befallen me. He wept for pity of me and gave me fifty dinars, saying, 'Take my advice and go out forthright from Baghdad and let this provide thee till thy heart be diverted from the love of her and thou forget her. Thou art a man of letters and clerkship and thy handwriting is good and thy breeding excellent : seek out, then, whom thou wilt of the viceroys³ and throw thyself on his bounty. It may be God will reunite thee with thy slave-girl.'

I hearkened to his words (and indeed my mind was fortified and I was somewhat comforted) and resolved to betake myself to Wasit,⁴ where I had kinsfolk. So I went down to the river-side, where I saw a ship moored and the sailors carrying goods and rich stuffs on board. I asked them to take me with them and carry me to Wasit ; but they replied, 'We cannot do that, for the ship belongs to a Hashimi.' However, I tempted them with [promise of] reward, and they said, 'We

¹ i.e. beloved one.

² i.e. of those destined to hell.

³ Or governors of provinces.

⁴ A town of Irak Arabi, between Baghdad and Bassora.

cannot take thee on this fashion ;¹ if it must be, put off those fine clothes of thine and don sailors' clothes and sit with us, as thou wert one of us.' So I went away and buying sailors' clothes, put them on ; after which I bought me somewhat of victual [for the voyage] and returning to the vessel; which was bound for Bassora, embarked with the crew.

Before long I saw my slave-girl herself [come on board], attended by two waiting women ; whereupon my chagrin subsided and I said in myself, 'Now shall I see her and hear her singing, till we come to Bassora.' Soon after, up rode the Hashimi, with a party of folk, and they embarked in the ship, which dropped down the river with them. Presently the Hashimi brought out food and ate with the damsel, whilst the rest ate amidships. Then he said to her, 'How long wilt thou abstain from singing and persist in this mourning and weeping ? Thou art not the first that hath been parted from a beloved one.' Wherefore I knew what she suffered for love of me. Then he hung a curtain before her in the side of the ship and calling for those who ate apart, sat down with them without the curtain ; and I enquired concerning them and behold, they were his brethren.² Then he set before them what they needed of wine and dessert, and they ceased not to press the damsel to sing, till she called for the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses :

The company have passed away with those whom I adore ; By night they
went nor to depart with my desire forbore.
And since their caravan fared hence, live coals of tamarisk-wood Within
the lover's heart rage high and higher evermore.

Then weeping overpowered her and she threw down the lute and left singing ; whereat the folk were troubled and I fell down in a swoon. They thought I was possessed³ and one of them fell to reciting exorcisms in my ear ; nor did they cease to comfort her and beseech her to sing, till she tuned the lute again and sang these verses :

I stand lamenting travellers who bound their burdens on ; Within my heart
their dwelling is, though far away they're gone.
Hard by the ruined camp I stand and question it of them : Waste is the
camping-place and void the dwellings thereupon.

¹ i.e. clad as thou art.

² i.e. his kinsfolk of the Hashimi family or perhaps his clients.

³ Of a genie, the common Eastern explanation of an epileptic fit.

Then she fell down in a swoon and weeping arose amongst the folk ; and I also cried out and fainted away. The sailors were vexed with me and one of the Hashimi's servants said to them, ' How came ye to take this madman on board ? ' So they said to each other, ' When we come to the next village, we will put him ashore and rid us of him.' When I heard this, I was sore troubled and summoned up all my courage, saying to myself, ' Nothing will serve me to deliver myself from their hands, except I make shift to acquaint her with my presence in the ship, so she may prevent my putting out.'

Then we sailed on till eventide, when we came to a hamlet¹ and the captain said, ' Come, let us go ashore.' So they all landed, [leaving me in the ship] : whereupon I rose and going behind the curtain took the lute and changed its accord, course² by course, and tuning it after a fashion of my own,³ that she had learnt of me, returned to my place in the ship. Presently, they came on board again and the moon shone out upon the river and bank. Then said the Hashimi to the damsel, ' God upon thee, trouble not our lives ! ' So she took the lute, and touching it with her hand, gave a sob, that they thought her soul had departed [her body], and said, ' By Allah, my master is with us in the ship ! ' ' By Allah,' answered the Hashimi, ' were this so, I would not forbid him our company ! Haply he would lighten thy chagrin, so we might enjoy thy singing : but it cannot be that he is on board.' But she said, ' I cannot sing nor play whilst my lord is with us.' Quoth the Hashimi, ' Let us ask the sailors.' And she said, ' Do so.' So he questioned them, saying, ' Have ye carried any one with you ? ' And they said, ' No.'

Then I feared lest the enquiry should end there ; so I

¹ Or farm.

² Or perhaps "mode" (*terikeh*).

³ Most of the great Arab musicians had their own peculiar fashion of tuning the lute, for the purpose of extending its register or facilitating the accompaniment of songs composed in uncommon keys and rhythms or possibly of increasing its sonority, and it appears to have been a common test of the skill of a great musician, such as Ishac el Mausili or his father Ibrahim, to require him to accompany a difficult song on a lute purposely untuned. As a (partial) modern instance of the practice referred to in the text, may be cited Paganini's custom of lowering or raising the G string of the violin in playing certain of his own compositions. According to the *Kitab el Aghani*, Ishac el Mausili is said to have familiarized himself, by incessant practise, with the exact sounds produced by each division of the strings of the four-course lute of his day, under every imaginable circumstance of tuning.

laughed and said, ‘Yes; I am her master and taught her, when I was her lord.’ ‘By Allah,’ said she, ‘that is my lord’s voice!’ So the servants carried me to the Hashimi, who knew me at once and said to me, ‘Out on thee! What plight is this in which I see thee and what hath brought the to this pass?’ So I told him all that had befallen of my affair, weeping the while, and the damsel wailed aloud from behind the curtain. The Hashimi wept sore, he and his brethren, for pity of me and he said, ‘By Allah, I have not drawn near the damsel nor lain with her, nor have I even heard her sing till this day! I am a man to whom God hath been bountiful and I came to Baghdad but to hear singing and seek my allowances of the Commander of the Faithful. I accomplished both my occasions and being about to return home, said to myself, ‘Let us hear somewhat of the singing of Baghdad.’ Wherefore I bought this damsel, knowing not how it was with you both: and I take God to witness that, when I reached Bassora, I will free her and marry her to thee and assign you what will suffice you, and more: but on condition that, whenever I have a mind to hear music, a curtain shall be hung for her and she shall sing to me from behind it, and thou shalt be of the number of my brethren and boon-companions.’

At this I rejoiced and he put his head within the curtain and said to her, ‘Will that content thee?’ Whereupon she fell to blessing and thanking him. Then he called a servant and said to him, ‘Take this young man and do off his clothes and clothe him in costly raiment and incense him¹ and bring him back to us.’ So the servant did with me as his master bade him and brought me back to him, and he set wine before me, even as before the rest of the company. Then the damsel fell to singing after the goodliest fashion and chanted these verses:

They rail at me because, upon the parting day, I wept, when my belov’d
farewell to me did say.
They never knew the taste of severance nor felt The fire that in my breast
for sorrow rageth aye.
Only th’ afflicted one of passion knoweth, he Whose heart amongst these
steads is lost and gone astray.

The folk rejoiced in her song with an exceeding joy and my

¹ i.e. perfume his clothes and person with the fragrant smoke of burning aloes-wood or ambergris, a common practice among the Arabs.

gladness redoubled so that I took the lute from her and preluding after the most melodious fashion, sang the following verses :

Ask favours, if thou needs must ask, of generous men, Who affluence all their lives have known and happy fate.
 O' the generous to ask brings honour, but upon The asking from a churl blame and dishonour wait.
 When thou must needs abase thyself, if thou must ask, I rede thee still abase thyself unto the great.¹
 The generous to exalt no true abasement is ; To magnify the mean doth men humiliate.

The company rejoiced in me with an exceeding joy and they ceased not from pleasure and delight, whilst anon I sang and anon the damsel, till we came to one of the landing-places, where the vessel moored and all on board went ashore and I with them. Now I was drunken with wine and squatted down ; but drowsiness overcame me and I slept, and the folk returned to the ship, without missing me, for that they also were drunken, and continued their voyage till they reached Bassora. As for me, I slept on till the heat of the sun aroused me, when I arose and looked about me, but saw no one. Now I had given my spending-money to the damsel and had not a rap left. Moreover, I had forgotten to ask the Hashimi his name and titles and where his house was at Bassora; so I was confounded and it was as if my joy at meeting the damsel had been but a dream ; and I abide in perplexity till there came up a great vessel, in which I embarked and she carried me to Bassora.

Now I had never entered the place and knew none there ; so I accosted a grocer and taking of him inkhorn and paper, sat down to write. He admired my hand-writing and seeing my dress soiled, questioned me of my case, to which I replied that I was a stranger and poor. Quoth he, 'Wilt thou abide with me and order the accounts of my shop and I will give thee thy food and clothing and half a dirhem a day ?' 'It is well,' answered I and abide with him and kept his accounts and ordered his incomings and outgoings for a month, at the end of which time he found his receipts increased and his expenses lessened ; wherefore he thanked me and made my wage a dirhem a day. When the year was out, he proposed

¹ i.e. not unto the mean.

to me to marry his daughter and become his partner in the shop. I agreed to this, and applied me to the shop. But I was broken in heart and spirit, and grief was apparent upon me ; and the grocer used to drink and invite me thereto, but I refused for melancholy.

On this wise I abode two years, till, one day, as I sat in the shop there passed by a company of people with meat and drink, and I asked the grocer what was to do. Quoth he 'This is the day of the pleasure-makers, when all the musicians and dancers of the town go forth with the young men of fortune to the banks of the Ubulleh river¹ and eat and drink among the trees there.' My heart prompted me to divert myself with the sight of this thing and I said in myself, 'Belike, I may foregather with her I love among these people.' So I told the grocer that I had a mind to this and he said, 'Up and go with them.' And he made me ready meat and drink and I went till I came to the Ubulleh river, when, behold, the folk were going away.

I was about to follow, when I espied the very bark in which the Hashimi had been with the damsel going along the river and the captain in her. So I cried out to him and he and his company knew me and took me on board with them and said to me, 'Art thou yet alive ?' And they embraced me and questioned me of my case. So I told them my story and they said, 'Indeed, we thought that drunkenness had gotten the mastery of thee and that thou [hadst fallen into the water and] wast drowned.' Then I asked them of the damsel, and they answered, 'When she came to know of thy loss, she rent her clothes and burnt the lute and fell to buffeting herself and lamenting, till we reached Bassora, when we said to her, 'Leave this weeping and sorrowing.' Quoth she, 'I will don black and make me a tomb beside the house and abide thereby and repent from singing.' So we suffered her to do this and on this wise she abideth to this day.'

Then they carried me to the Hashimi's house, where I saw the damsel as they had said. When she saw me, she gave a great cry, methought she had died, and I embraced her with a long embrace. Then said the Hashimi to me, 'Take her.'

¹A canal so called, branching off from the Tigris and leading from Bassora to an adjacent town of the same name. Its banks are a favourite pleasure-resort of the townsfolk, and it is said by the Arabs to be one of the four most delightful places in the world, the three others being situate at Damascus, Shiraz, Samarcand respectively.

And I answered, 'It is well : but do thou free her and marry her to me, according to thy promise.' So he did this and gave us costly goods and store of raiment and furniture and five hundred dinars, saying, 'This is the amount of that which I purpose to allow you monthly, but on condition that thou be my boon-companion and that I hear the girl sing [when I will].'

Moreover, he assigned us a house and bade transport thither all that we needed : so when I went to the house, I found it full of furniture and stuffs and carried the damsels thither. Then I betook me to the grocer and told him all that had befallen me, begging him to hold me excused for putting away his daughter, without offence on her part ; and I paid her her dowry¹ and what else behoved me.² I abode with the Hashimi on this wise two years and became a man of great wealth and was restored well-nigh to the former estate of prosperity wherein I had been at Baghdad, I and the damsels. And indeed God the Bountiful put an end to our troubles and vouchsafed us abundant good fortune and caused our patience to issue in the attainment of our desire : wherefore to Him be the praise in this world and the next.

¹ i.e. the contingent dowry. The dowry agreed for on an Arab marriage consists of two parts, one paid down on consummation and the other agreed to be paid to the wife, contingently upon her being divorced by her husband.

² i.e. the cost of her maintenance during the four months which must, according to Muslim law, elapse before she could marry again.

THEPIOUSBLACKSLAVE.¹

(Quoth Malik ben Dinar,² on whom God have mercy), We were once afflicted with drought at Bassora and went forth repeatedly to pray for rain, but saw no sign of our prayers being answered. So I went, I and Itaa es Selemi and Thabit el Benani and Neja el Bekkaa and Mohammed ben Wasi and Eyoub es Sukhiyani and Hebib el Farsi and Hassan ben Abou Sinan and Ótbeh el Ghulam and Salih el Muzeni,³ till we reached the place of prayer, when the boys came out of the schools and we offered up prayers for rain, but could see no sign of acceptance. So about mid-day the people went away and I and Thabit el Benani abode till nightfall, when we saw a black of comely visage, slender-shanked and big-bellied, come up, clad in a pair of woollen drawers; if all he wore had been priced, it would not have fetched a couple of dirhems. He fetched water and made the ablution, then going up to the prayer-niche, prayed two inclinations deftly, his standing and bowing and prostration being [well-nigh] simultaneous. Then he raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'O my God and my Master and my Lord, how long wilt thou reject the prayers of Thy servants in that which offereth no hurt to Thy sovereignty? Is that which is with Thee expended or are the treasures of Thy kingdom exhausted? I conjure Thee by Thy love to me to pour out upon us Thy rain-clouds forthwith!'

Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when the sky clouded over and there came a rain, as of the emptying of waterskins. When we left the oratory, we were up to our knees in water, and we were lost in wonder at the black. So I accosted him and said to him, 'Out on thee, O black, art thou not ashamed of what thou saidst?' 'How so?' asked he. 'Didst thou not adjure God by his love for thee?' said I. 'What giveth thee to know that He loveth thee?' 'Away from me,' replied he, 'O thou that art distracted [by the love

¹ Payne's *Arabian Nights*, Vol. v., p. 16.

² A renowned theologian and ascetic, who flourished at Bassora in the eighth century.

³ Well-known theologians and jurists of the time.

of the world] from [the care of] thine own soul! Where was I, when he gave me strength to identify myself with Him and of His special favour vouchsafed unto me the knowledge of Him?¹ How deemest thou that He aided me thus except of His love to me? Verily, His love to me is after the measure of my love to Him.' Quoth I, 'Tarry awhile with me, may God have mercy on thee!' But he said, 'I am a slave and the Book of God enjoins me to obey my lesser² master.' So he went away and we followed him afar off, till we saw him enter a slave-dealer's house.

Now the first part of the night was passed and the last half was long upon us, so we went away; but next morning, we repaired to the slave-dealer and said to him, 'Hast thou a boy³ to sell us for service?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'I have nigh upon a hundred boys, and they are all for sale.' Then he showed us slave after slave, till he had shown us threescore and ten; but my friend was not among them, and the dealer said, 'These are all I have.' But, as we were going away, we espied a ruinous hut behind his house and going in saw the black standing there. 'It is he, by the Lord of the Kaabeh!' cried I and turning back to the dealer, said to him, 'Sell me yonder slave.' 'O Abou Yehya.'⁴ replied he, 'this is a plaguy, morose, unprofitable fellow, who hath no concern by night but weeping and by day but repentance.' 'It is for that I want him,' said I. So the dealer called him, and he came out, feigning drowsiness. Quoth his master, 'Take him at thine own price, so thou hold me quit of all his faults.' So I bought him for twenty dinars and said, 'What is his name?' 'Maimoun,' answered the dealer; and I took him by the hand and went out with him, intending for my house; but he turned to me and said, 'O my lesser lord, why didst thou buy me? By Allah, I am not fit for the service of the creature!' 'On my head be it,' replied I; 'I bought thee that I might serve thee myself.' 'Why so?' asked he, and I said, 'Wast thou not in company with us yesterday in the place of prayer?' 'And didst thou hear me?' quoth he; and I answered, 'It was I accosted thee yesterday and spoke with thee.'

¹ "Identification" and "Knowledge," stages of the Sufi mystic on the "Way" or journey to God.

² i.e. earthly master, as opposed to God, his great or heavenly master.

³ Male black slaves in the East, as in the United States, are often called "boys," irrespectively of age.

⁴ Surname of Malik ben Dinar.

Then we went on till we came to a mosque, where he entered and prayed a two-bow prayer ; after which he said, ‘O my God and my Master and my Lord, the secret that was between Thee and me Thou hast discovered unto men and hast betrayed me therein among Thy creatures. How then shall life be sweet to me, now that others than Thou have happened upon that which is between Thee and me ? I conjure Thee to take my soul to Thee forthright.’ So saying he prostrated himself, and I waited awhile till, seeing that he did not raise his head, I went up to him and moved him and found that he was indeed dead, the mercy of God the Most High be upon him ! I laid him out and looked at him, and behold, he was smiling. Moreover, whiteness had gotten the better of blackness in his face, and it was radiant with light.

As we wondered at his affair, the door opened and a young man came in to us and said, ‘Peace be on you ! May God make great our reward and yours for our brother Maimoun ! Here is his shroud : wrap him in it.’ So saying, he gave us two robes, never had we seen their like, and we shrouded him therein. And now his tomb is a place whither the folk resort to pray for rain and ask favours of God ; and how excellently well saith the poet on this subject :

The pleasaunce of the just is in a garden of the skies, About whose gates
God's doorkeepers hold ever watch and ward.
Behold, there drink they of old wine, and mingled therewithal Tesnim,¹
that is, the wine of close communion with the Lord.
The secret of their hearts is safe from other than God's sight ; For that
their sprights with His are blent in one supreme accord.

¹ Name of a fountain of Paradise.

THE DEVOUT PRINCE.¹

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid had a son, who, from the time he attained the age of sixteen, renounced the world and walked in the way of ascetics and devotees. He was wont to go out to the tombs and say, 'Behold, ye that lie here once possessed the world, but that was no deliverer for you [from death], and now ye are come to your graves! Would God I knew what ye say and what is said to you!' And he wept, as one weeps that is troubled and fearful, and repeated the words of the poet :

Whene'er the funerals pass, my heart with fear is torn,
And the wailing
of the mourners maketh me to mourn.

One day, as he sat among the tombs, according to his wont his father passed by, in all his state, surrounded by his viziers and grandees and the officers of his household, who saw the Khalif's son, with a gown of woollen stuff on his body and a cowl of the same on his head, and said to one another, 'This youth dishonours the Commander of the Faithful among Kings: but, if he reproved him, he would leave his present way of life. The Khalif heard what they said; so he bespoke his son of this, saying, 'O my son, thou puttest me to shame by thy present way of life'. The young man looked at him and made no reply: then he beckoned to a bird, that was perched on the battlements of the palace, and said to it, 'O bird, I conjure thee, by Him who created thee, alight upon my hand.' And straightway it flew down and perched on his hand. Quoth he 'Return to thy place;' and it did so. Then he said, 'Alight on the hand of the Commander of the Faithful;' but it refused, and he said to his father, 'It is thou that puttest me to shame, by thy love of the world; and now I am resolved to depart from thee, never to return to thee, save in the world to come.' Then he went down to Bassora, where he fell to working with those that wrought in mud,² taking, as his day's

¹ Payne's *Arabian Nights*, Vol. iv., p. 249.

² i.e. the Builders, who, in the East used mud or clay for mortar.

hire, but a dirhem and a danic.¹ With the danic he fed himself and gave alms of the dirhem.

(Quoth Abou Aamir of Bassora), There fell down a wall in my house : so I went out to the station of the artisans, to find one who should set it up for me, and my eyes fell on a handsome youth of a radiant countenance. So I accosted him and said to him, "O my friend dost thou seek work ?" "Yes," answered he ; and I said, "Come with me and build a wall." "On two conditions," replied he. Quoth I, "What are they O my friend ?" "First," said he, "that my hire be a dirham and a danic, and secondly, that, when the Muezzin calls to prayer, thou shalt let me go to pray with the congregation." "It is well," answered I and carried him to my house, where he fell to work, such work as I never saw the like of. Presently, I named to him the morning-meal ; but he said, "No" and I knew that he was fasting. When he heard the call to prayer, he said to me, "Thou knowest the condition ?" "Yes," answered I. So he loosed his girdle and applying himself to the ablution, made it after a fashion than which I never saw a goodlier ; then went to the mosque and prayed with the congregation and returned to his work. He did the like upon the call to afternoon-prayer, and when I saw him fall to work again thereafterward, I said to him, "O my friend the hours of labour are over for to-day ; a workman's day is but till the time of afternoon-prayer." "Glory be to God," answered he, "my service is till the night." And he ceased not to work until nightfall, when I gave him two dirhems. Quoth he, "What is this ?" "By Allah," answered I, "this is [but] part of thy wage, because of thy diligence in my service But he threw me back the two pieces, saying, "I will have no more than was agreed upon between us." I pressed him to take them, but could not prevail upon him ; so I gave him the dirhem and the danic, and he went away.

Next morning early, I went to the station, but found him not ; so I enquired for him and was told that he came thither only on Saturdays. So when Saturday came, I betook me to the market and finding him there, said to him, "In the name of God, do me the favour to come and work for me." ["Willingly,"] said he, "upon the conditions thou wottest of." "It is well," answered I and carrying him to my house, stood watching him, unseen of him, and saw him take a handful of mud and lay it on the wall, when, behold, the stones ranged

¹ About a penny.

themselves one upon another ; and I said. “ On this wise are the friends of God.” He worked out his day and did even more than before ; and when it was night, I gave him his hire, and he took it and went away.

When the third Saturday came round, I went to the standing, but found him not : so I enquired for him and was told that he lay sick in the hut of such a woman. Now this was an old woman, renowned for piety, who had a hut of reeds in the burial-ground. So I went thither and found him lying on the naked earth, with a brick for a pillow and his face beaming with light. I saluted him and he returned my salute and I sat down at his head, weeping over his tenderness of years and strangerhood and submission to the will of his Lord. Then said I to him. “ Hast thou any need ? ” “ Yes,” answered he ; and I said, “ What is it ? ” He replied, “ Come hither to-morrow in the forenoon and thou wilt find me dead. Wash me and dig my grave and tell none thereof ; but shroud me in this my gown, after thou hast unsewn it and take out what thou shall find in the bosom, which keep with thee. Then, when thou hast prayed over me and laid me in the dust, go to Baghdad, and watch for the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, till he come forth, when do thou bear him my salutation and give him what thou shalt find in the breast of my gown.’ Then he made the profession of the Faith and glorified his Lord in the most eloquent of words, reciting the following verses :

Carry the trust of him on whom the wished-for death hath come To Er Reshid, and thy reward with thy Creator stand !
 “ An exile greets thee,” say “ who longed full sorely for thy sight ; With long desire he yearned for thee, far in a foreign strand,
 Nor hate nor weariness from thee estranged him, for, indeed, To God Most High he was brought near by kissing thy right hand.
 But, O my father ; ‘twas his heart, shunning the vain delights Of this thy world, that drove him forth to seek a distant land ! ”

Then he betook himself to prayer, asking the pardon of God and blessing the Lord of the Just¹ and repeating verses of the Koran ; after which he recited the following :

Let not prosperity delude thee, father mine ; For fortune wastes and life must pass away.
 Whenas thou com’st to know of folk in evil plight, Think thou must answer it upon the Judgement Day.
 And when thou bearest forth the dead unto the tombs, Think that thou, too, must pass upon the self-same way !

¹ Mohammed.

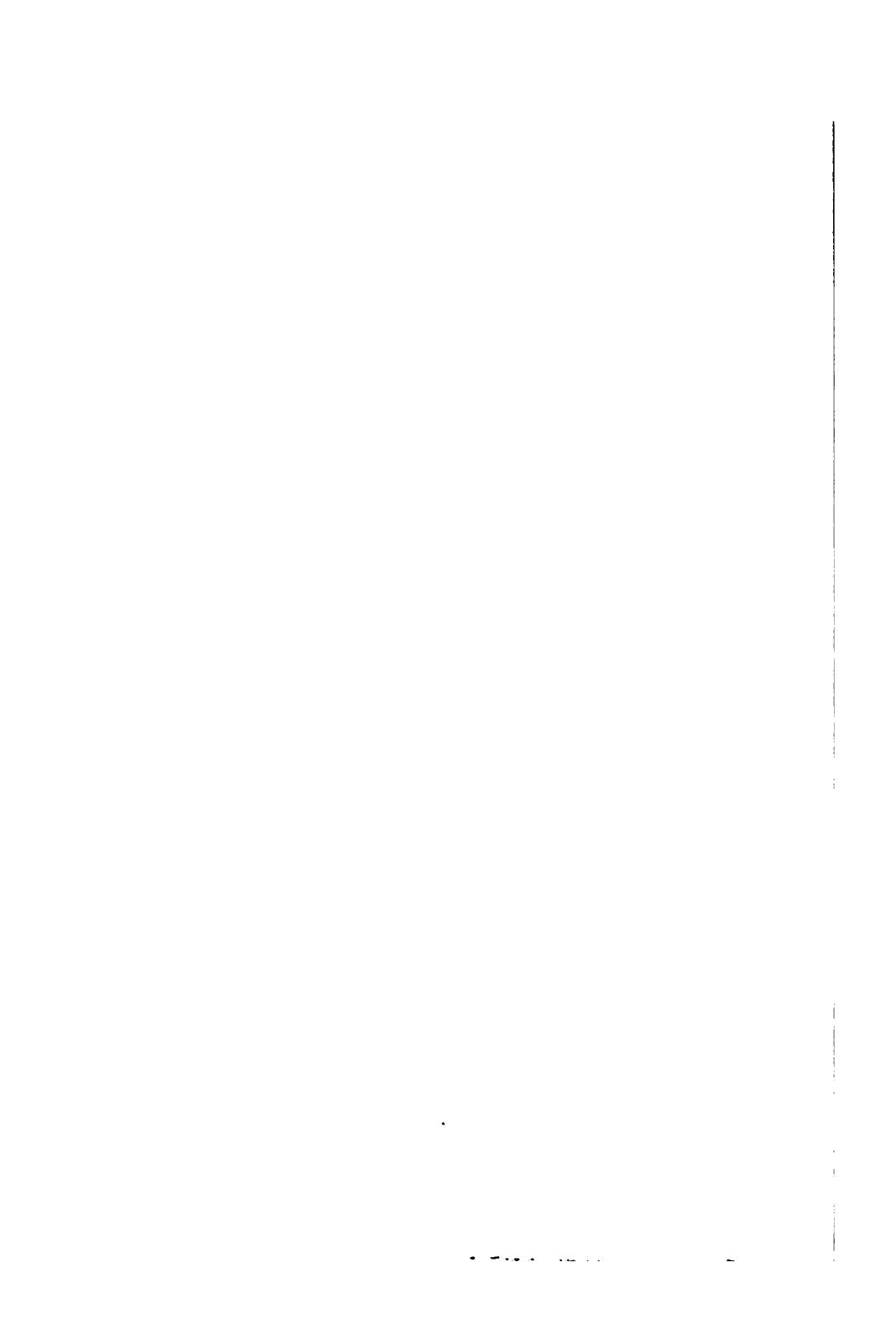
Then I left him and went home. On the morrow, I returned, at the appointed hour, and found him indeed dead, the mercy of God be on him ! So I washed him and unsewing his gown, found in the bosom a ruby worth thousands of dinars and said to myself, " By Allah, this youth was indeed abstracted from the things of this world !" After I had buried him, I made my way to Baghdad and going to the Khalif's palace, waited till he came forth, when I accosted him in one of the streets and gave him the ruby, which when he saw, he knew and fell down in a swoon. His attendants laid hands on me, but he revived and bade them unhand me and bring me courteously to the palace. They did his bidding, and when he returned, he sent for me and carrying me into his closet, said to me, " How doth the owner of this ruby ? " Quoth I, " He is dead ; " and told him what had passed ; whereupon he fell a-weeping and said, " The son hath profited ; but the father is disappointed." Then he called out, saying, " Ho, such an one ! " And behold, a woman came out to him. When she saw me, she would have withdrawn ; but he said to her, " Come and heed him not." So she entered and saluted, and he threw her the ruby, which when she knew she gave a great shriek and fell down in a swoon. As soon as she came to herself, she said, " O Commander of the Faithful, what hath God done with my son ? " And he said to me " Do thou tell her ; " for he could not speak for weeping. So I repeated the story to her, and she began to weep and say in a failing voice, " How I have longed for thy sight, O consolation of my eyes ! Would I might have given thee to drink when thou hadst none to tend thee ! Would I might have companioned with thee, whenas thou foundest none to cheer thee ! " And she poured forth tears and recited the following verses :

I weep for one to whom death came, an exile and in-pain ; Alone he died,
without a friend to whom he might complain.
Puissant and honoured and conjoined with those that loved him dear, To
live alone and seeing none, unfriended, he was fain.
That which the days conceal shall yet be manifest to us : Not one of us by
death, indeed, unsmitten may remain.
O absent one, the Lord of all decreed thy strangerhood, And thou left'st
far behind the love that was betwixt us twain !
Though death, my son, forbid me hope to see thee in this life, To-morrow,
on the Reckoning-Day, we two shall meet again.

Quoth I, " O Commander of the Faithful, was he indeed

thy son ?" "Yes," answered he ; "and indeed, before I succeeded to this office, he was wont to visit the learned and company with the devout ; but, when I became Khalif, he grew estranged from me and withdrew himself apart. Then said I to his mother, 'This thy son is absorbed in God the Most High, and it may be that tribulations shall befall and he be smitten with stress of evil chance ; wherefore, do thou give him this ruby, that it may be to him a resource in the hour of need.' So she gave it him, conjuring him to take it, and he obeyed her. Then he left the things of our world to us and removed himself from us ; nor did he cease to be absent from us, till he went to the presence of God (to whom belong might and majesty) with a holy and pure mind." Then said he, "Come show me his grave." So we repaired to Bassora and I showed him his son's grave. When he saw it, he wept and lamented, till he fell down in a swoon ; after which he came to himself and asked pardon of God, saying, "We are God's, and to Him we return !" and invoked blessings on the dead. Then he besought me of companionship ; but I said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, verily, in thy son's case is for me the gravest of admonitions !" And I recited the following verses :

'Tis I am the stranger ! None harbours the wight, Though he lie in his native city by night.
 'Tis I am the exile ! Nor children nor wife Nor comrades have I, to take ruth on my plight.
 The mosques are my refuge ; I haunt them indeed : My heart from their shelter shall never take flight.
 To the Lord of all creatures, to God be the praise, Whilst yet in the body abideth the spright.



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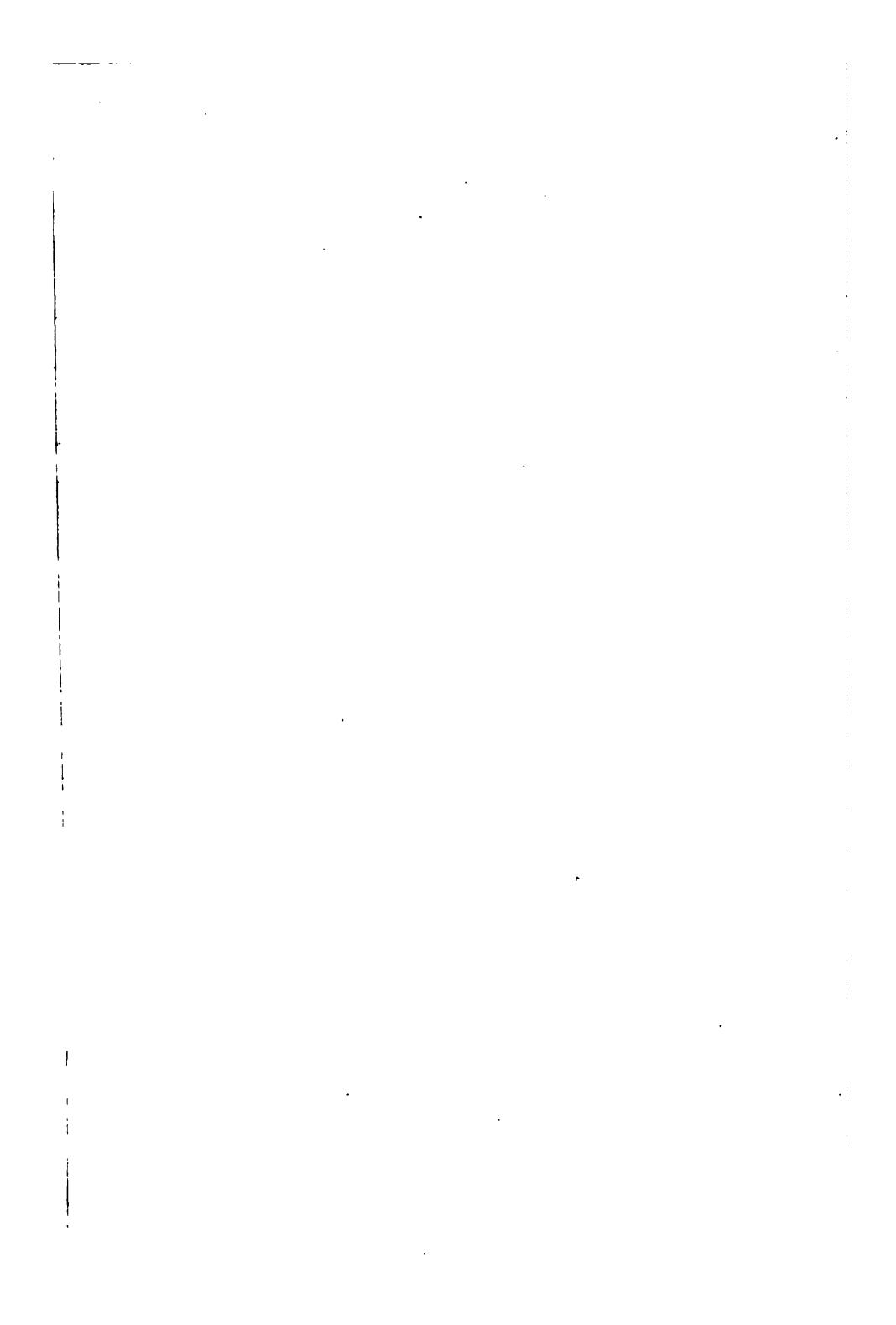
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